THE

Indian Cottage;

OR, A

SEARCH AFTER TRUTH,

Translated from the French of

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AUTHOR OF THE

VOYAGE TO THE ISLE OF FRANCE,

THE STUDIES OF NATURE,

SHIPWRECK, OR PAUL AND MARY, &c.

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INTRODUCTION.

INTO the following little tale I have endeavoured to throw more truths than are to be found in many hiſtories. It pourtrays the manners of the natives of India, and is founded on a real hiſtorical anecdote with which it commences.

Here let me aſſert, that in the preſent undertaking, it has by no means been my intention to place, in an abſurd and ridiculous point

of view, the learned ſocieties of Europe. I have, notwithſtanding, much reaſon to complain of them, not in reſpect to myſelf, but on account of the intereſt of truth, which they often perſecute when it contradicts their ſyſtems.

I wiſh to expreſs my obligations to ſeveral learned Engliſhmen, who, without a perſonal knowledge of me, and ſimply through an eſteem for the ſciences, have honoured my works* with their approbation.

* Theſe are, a Voyage to the Iſle of France—The Studies of Nature—The Wiſhes of a Solitary—and Paul and Virginia, a beautiful romance.

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The character I am about to give of one of their brethren, is an unequivocal proof of my eſteem for their nation.

What can be more praiſe-worthy than a ſearch after knowledge in foreign countries, the object of the late Dilettani Society in England —and an endeavour to extend its genial influence to ſavage nations, in which light I conſider the voyages of the immortal Cook, of Sir Joſeph Banks, &c.! Such enterpriſes intereſt humanity at large.

The former of theſe undertakings has been lately imitated in Den-

mark, the latter in France:—both of them, alas! unſucceſsfully. Of twelve learned Daniſh travellers, one only lived to return; and the cataſtrophe of the unfortunate de la Peyrouſe and his companions is but too certain.

It is not therefore that I blame ſcience in itſelf, but I am deſirous to ſhew that learned bodies, by their ambition, their jealouſy, and their prejudices, too frequently become obſtacles to its progreſs.

My particular aim is to alleviate the diſtreſſes of the human race in India. It is my wiſh to afford

ſuccour

ſuccour to the unfortunate, and to this ſentiment I give an univerſal extenſion. If philoſophy was formerly brought from India to Europe, why ſhould it not revert in our day, from civilized Europe to India, in its turn become barbarous?

At Calcutta a ſociety of learned Engliſhmen has been lately formed, which may tend to root out the prejudices of the Eaſt, and thus compenſate for the calamities of European wars and European commerce.

To make my arguments more graceful and agreeable, I have put them into the form of a tale. By tales men are every where rendered attentive to truth.

It has been ſaid with more wit than reaſon, that fable had its birth in the deſpotic countries of the Eaſt, where it was employed as a veil to the truth, to the end that the latter might reach the ears of tyrants. I will aſk, however, whether a Sultan would not be more offended at ſeeing himſelf painted emblematically as an owl or a leopard, than after nature? And whether reflected truths would not gall

gall him as much at the leaſt as direct ones?

An Engliſh Ambaſſador at the Court of Selim-Cha, Emperor of Mogul, relates, that this very deſpotic prince, having cauſed to be opened, whilſt he was by, ſome trunks ſent from England, to take out a few preſents deſtined for himſelf, was greatly ſurpriſed at finding a painting, repreſenting a Venus leading a Satyr by the noſe. "He fancied," ſays the narrator, "that this painting had been made in deriſion of the people of Aſia, who were repreſented in it by the black and horned Satyr, as being of

of the ſame complexion; and that the Venus which led the Satyr by the noſe, was ſymbolical of the great aſcendency the women in that country have over the men."

The Ambaſſador, to whom the painting was addreſſed, found it a matter of no ſmall difficulty to deſtroy the effect it had wrought on the mind of the Mogul: for which purpoſe he gave him an idea of our fables.

On this occaſion he recommends in the moſt expreſs manner, to the Directors of the Britiſh Eaſt-India Company, to avoid ſending in fu-

ture,

ture any allegorical paintings to India, "where the princes," ſays he, are very ſuſpicious." Suſpicion is, indeed, one of the principal characteriſtics of deſpots; and I am fully perſuaded that fables have on no account been invented for them, unleſs it has been to flatter them.

In general, a taſte for fables is ſpread over the whole earth, but prevails much more in free than in deſpotic countries. Savage nations found their traditions upon fables. There is no country in which they have been more common than in Greece, where all the objects of

nature, of policy, and of religion, were merely the reſult of certain metamorphoſes. Few illuſtrious families there but had ſome animal in the number of their anceſtors, and who did not reckon amongſt their he and ſhe couſins, bulls, ſwans, nightingales, doves, crows, or magpies. We may remark that the Engliſh, in their literature, have a particular fondneſs for allegory, although truth may be ſpoken very freely amongſt them. The Aſiatics, in the time of Eſop, had a ſimilar bent; but we no longer meet with fabuliſts amongſt them, although their country is filled with Sultans.

Thoſe

Thoſe who have approached the neareſt to nature, and who have conſequently been the moſt free, have had the ſtrongeſt propenſity to adorn truth with fables: 'tis an effect of the love itſelf of truth, which is the ſentiment of the laws of nature.

Truth is the light of the ſoul, as the phyſical light is the truth of bodies—the two animated form the ſcience of what is. The former clears up objects, the latter diſplays to us their uſes: and, as all light derives its origin from the ſun, ſo does all truth originate with God, of whom that planet is the moſt ſenſible image.

Few men can ſupport the pure light of the ſun. It is on account of the weakneſs of our eyes, that nature has furniſhed us with eye-lids, to veil them to a neceſſary degree;—that ſhe has planted the earth with foreſts, whoſe green foliage tenders to us pleaſant and tranſparent ſhades;—and that ſhe has diffuſed in the air vapours and clouds, to weaken the too lively rays of the planet of day.

In the ſame way few men can embrace truths purely metaphyſical. It is owing to the weakneſs of our underſtanding, that nature has provided us with ignorance, as the eye-lid

eye-lid of the ſoul. By this device the ſoul gradually opens herſelf to truth;—admits no more of it than ſhe can ſupport:—encompaſſes herſelf by fables beneath the ſhade of which ſhe contemplates it;—and when ſhe wiſhes to ſoar to the Divinity himſelf, ſhe veils him by allegories and myſteries, to be enabled to ſupport his luſtre.

We ſhould not ſee the light of the ſun, did it not reſt intermediately upon bodies, or at leaſt upon clouds. Beyond our own atmoſphere it eſcapes us, and dazzles us at its ſource. 'Tis the ſame with truth, which we ſhould not be able

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to ſeize, did it not fix itſelf upon ſenſible events, or at leaſt upon metaphors and compariſons which reflect it; in its paſſage to us it requires an intervening body. Our intellects have no hold upon truths purely metaphyſical; they are dazzled by thoſe that flow from the Divinity, and can only embrace thoſe which reſt upon his works.

It is for this laſt reaſon that the language of civilized nations paints nothing, becauſe it is filled with vague and abſtracted ideas. On the other hand that of nations in a ſtate of ſimplicity and nature is extremely

extremely expreſſive, becauſe it is filled with ſimilitudes and images.

The former are accuſtomed to conceal their ſentiments; the latter to extend them. But as it often happens that clouds, ſcattered in a thouſand fantaſtic ſhapes, decompoſe the rays of the ſun into tints richer and more varied than thoſe which colour the regular works of nature, ſo do fables reflect truth more extenſively than real events. They tranſport it into all the kingdoms, appropriating to its uſe, animals, trees, elements—and throw from it a thouſand reflections. Thus play the rays of the ſun, without

without extinguiſhing in the water, where they reflect the objects of the earth and ſkies, and double their beauties by conſonances.

Ignorance, therefore, is as neceſſary to truth, as the ſhadow is to the light. From the firſt the harmonies of our underſtanding are formed, as thoſe of our ſight are compoſed from the latter.

Moraliſts have almoſt always confounded ignorance with error. Ignorance, ſimply conſidered, and without the truth with which it harmonizes ſo agreeably, is the repoſe of our intelligence—it makes

us

us forget paſt evils, diſſembles to us the preſent ones, and conceals from us thoſe of the future: Laſtly, it is a good, ſince we hold it from nature.

Error, on the contrary, is the work of man; it is always an evil; —'tis a falſe light which ſhines to lead us aſtray. I cannot better compare it than to the glare of a fire which conſumes the habitations it illumines. It is worthy of remark that there is not a ſingle moral or phyſical evil but has an error for its principle. Tyrannies, ſlavery, and wars, are founded on political errors, nay even on ſacred ones,

for the tyrants who have propagated them, have conſtantly derived them from the Divinity, or for ſome virtue, to render them reſpected by their ſubjects.

It is, notwithſtanding, very eaſy to diſtinguiſh error from truth. Truth is a natural light which ſhines of itſelf throughout the whole earth, becauſe it ſprings from God. Error is an artificial light which needs to be fed inceſſantly, and which can never be univerſal, becauſe it is nothing more than the work of man. Truth is uſeful to all men; —error is profitable but to a few, and is hurtful to the generality, becauſe

becauſe individual intereſt, when it ſeparates itſelf from it, is inimical to general intereſt.

Particular care ſhould be taken not to confound fiction with error. Fiction is the veil of truth, whilſt error is its phantom: and the former has been often invented to diſſipate the latter. But, however, innocent it may be in its principle, it becomes dangerous when it aſſumes the leading quality of error, that is to ſay, when it is turned to the particular profit of any ſet of men.

For example.—It was of little moment in old times that the moon,

under the name of Diana, was made a Goddeſs of perpetual celibacy, who preſided over hunting. This allegory implied that the light of the moon was favourable to hunters in laying their ſnares for deer, and that the exerciſe of hunting deſtroyed the paſſion of love.

There was no great miſchief in it when the foreſt-pine was dedicated to the above Goddeſs: this tree became a rendezvous for the chaſe.

In the ſame way the oak was dedicated to Jupiter, the olive-tree to Minerva, the pine to Pan, the laurel to

to Apollo, the myrtle to Venus, &c. Trees were alſo conſecrated to demi-gods and heroes: the poplar was ſacred to Hercules. Nymphs, ſhepherds, and ſhepherdeſſes partook of what remained of the vegetable creation—the jealous Clytia gave her jaundice and her attitude to the turnſol; and Adonis tinged with his blood the flower which bears his name. Botaniſts, in our time, when they diſcover new plants, apply them to the purpoſes of commemorating friendſhip and gratitude, by beſtowing on them the names of their patrons and friends. Aſtronomers extend this idea to the planetary ſyſtem.—The new planet

diſcovered

diſcovered by Herſchell is by him called the *Georgium Sidus:* amongſt his friends in moſt parts of Europe it bears his own name. Laſtly, mariners apply to the continents, rivers and iſlands they diſcover, the names of ſaints, kings, commanders, events, conqueſts, and maſſacres, the remembrance of which they wiſh to perpetuate.

There was as yet no great harm done, when a hunter, to gain the protection of Diana, hung to a tree the head of a wolf. But when he ſuſpended it to the entire ſkin of that animal, people were not wanted who contrived to turn it to their profit

profit. They built and dedicated to the Goddeſs a chapel, where they offered up not only the ſkin of a wolf, but ſheep, to preſerve from wolves the reſt of the flock.

The offerings multiplied on account of the death of a monſtrous wild boar, which had deſtroyed vines, and made a great havoc amongſt the dogs and children in the neighbourhood.

The hunters attracted pilgrims, and pilgrims merchants. A town was ſoon built round the chapel, which, amongſt ſo many credulous people, was not long without its oracles.

oracles. As victories were predicted, kings ſent preſents;—the chapel then became a temple, and the town a city furniſhed with pontiffs, magiſtrates and territories.

Taxes were ſoon levied on the people, to build magnificent temples, like that of Epheſus. And as fear operates on the human mind more effectually than confidence, to render the worſhip of Diana formidable, they offered up to her human ſacrifices!

Thus did an allegory, invented for their happineſs, concur to the miſery of the people, becauſe it was converted

converted to the profit of a particular city or temple.

Truth itſelf is injurious to men, when it becomes the inheritance of a tribe. There is certainly a wide ſpace betwixt the toleration of the Evangeliſts, and the intolerance of the Inquiſition—betwixt the precept given by Jeſus Chriſt to his apoſtles, to ſhake the duſt from their feet when they left a city where they were denied a reception —his indignation when they required of him that they ſhould command fire from heaven to conſume thoſe who refuſed to receive them —and the deſtruction of the anci-

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ent Indians in South America, and the butcheries of the Auto-da-fe.

At the gallery of the Tuilleries, to the right on entering the gardens, there is an Ionic column, which the celebrated Blondel, profeſſor of architecture, uſed to ſhew as a model to his diſciples. He pointed out to their obſervation, that all the columns which followed it diminiſhed gradually in beauty. The firſt, ſaid he, is the work of a famous ſculptor, and the others have been made ſucceſſively by artiſts who have deviated from its graces and proportions, according as they have been farther removed from it. He who ſculptured the

ſecond

ſecond, ſucceeded pretty well in imitating the firſt; but he who formed the third, copied the ſecond only. Thus, from copy to copy, the laſt, as you may obſerve, is exceedingly beneath the original.

I have many times compared the Evangeliſts to this beautiful column in the Tuilleries, and the works of the ancient commentators to the others which ſupport the gallery. If we were to annex in continuation the modern commentators down to the preſent time, what hideous *columns* would their works diſplay to us! and who in the tempeſts of life would truſt to their ſupport? Since

Since truth is a ray of celeſtial light, it will ſhine always for all men, provided their windows be not darkened againſt it. But, in all its varieties, how many bodies founded to propagate it, on this very account that they can convert it to their profit, ſubſtitute to it that of their tapers or their lanterns! If they are powerful, they do not fail to perſecute thoſe who find it; and if they are not ſo, they oppoſe to them an inert force which prevents them from propagating it: 'tis for this reaſon that thoſe who love it frequently retire from men and cities. Such is the truth I have wiſhed to prove in this little work

work—happy if I can contribute to the felicity of a ſingle unfortunate in Europe, by painting that of an Indian Paria in his cottage!

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INDIAN COTTAGE.

THE Society of Dilettanti, eſtabliſhed ſome years ago in London, for the purpoſe of philoſophical reſearches, reckoned, amongſt a very reſpectable liſt of members, ſeveral of the royal family of England, and a few potentates of the north of Europe.

By this ſociety twenty men of letters were engaged, who were to travel over vari-

ous parts of the globe, and to collect ſuch information reſpecting the ſciences, as would enlighten mankind and contribute to their happineſs.

Each of theſe was provided with a book, containing a liſt of the queſtions, the ſolutions of which he was to procure on his travels: and notwithſtanding the queſtions he was furniſhed with, were diſtinct from thoſe given to the others, and adapted to the countries he was to viſit, ſtill were all the queſtions ſo reciprocally connected, that the light thrown upon one ſhould neceſſarily extend to the reſt.

The Preſident of the Royal Society, who, with the help of his brethren, had digeſted them, was fully aware that the clearing up of one difficulty frequently depends upon the ſolution of another, and that again on the preceding one; which carries the inveſtiga-

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tion of truth much farther than might be expected. To adopt, in ſhort, the Preſident's expreſſions, in the inſtructions given to the learned travellers, this was the moſt ſuperb edifice any nation had yet erected, in favour of the progreſs of human knowledge: and this, he added, clearly proves the neceſſity of academic bodies, to collect together the truths ſcattered over the whole earth.

Beſides his volume of queſtions to be elucidated, each traveller was commiſſioned to purchaſe on his way, the moſt ancient editions of the Bible, and the ſcarceſt manuſcripts of every kind: he was, at leaſt, to ſpare no expence in procuring authentic copies of them. The ſociety of Dilettanti had for this purpoſe provided letters of reccommendation to the Britiſh ambaſſadors and conſuls reſiding at the places he was to paſs through; and, what was ſtill better, had ſupplied him with

good bills of exchange, indorſed by eminent bankers in London.

The moſt learned of theſe adventurers, whom I ſhall in future ſtile Doctor, to which title he had an indiſputable claim, he underſtood the Hebrew, Arabic, and Indian languages. He was accordingly diſpatched overland to India, the cradle of all the arts and ſciences.

Directing his courſe to Holland, he viſited the ſynagogue at Amſterdam, and the ſynod at Dordrecht. In France, he inſpected the Sorbonne, and the Royal Acadamy of ſciences.—In Italy a vaſt number of academies, muſeums, and libraries; amongſt others, the muſeum at Florence, the library of St. Mark at Venice, and that of the vatican at Rome.

When

When at Rome, he hesitated whether or not he should, before he steered eastwardly, consult the famous university of Salamanca in Spain: but dreading the inquisition, he chose rather to embark straight for Turkey. Arrived at Constantinople, an effendi, to whom he administered a fee, permitted him to ransack all the books in the mosque of Saint Sophia. He passed from thence into Egypt, amongst the Copts; then to the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, and the Monks of Mount Cassin; and proceeded afterwards to Sana, in Arabia; to Ispahan, Kandahar, Delhi, and Agra. At length, after a lapse of three years, he reached the banks of the Ganges, and found himself at Benares, the Athens of India, where he conferred with the Bramins.

The Doctor's collection of ancient editions, original books, scarce manuscripts, copies

copies, extracts, and annotations of every deſcription, was by this time become more conſiderable than it had been the lot of any individual to collect before. Suffice it to ſay, that it conſiſted of ninety bales, weighing together nine thouſand five hundred and forty pounds, troy weight. He was on the point of embarking for London, with this very rich cargo of knowledge, overjoyed at having ſurpaſſed the expectations of the Royal Society, when a very ſimple reflection filled his mind with ſadneſs.

He conſidered, that after having conferred with the Jewiſh Rabbis, the Proteſtant miniſters, the ſuperintendants of the Lutheran churches, the Catholic doctors, the academicians of Paris, of la Cruſca, of the Arcades, and of twenty-four others of the moſt celebrated academies in Italy, the Greek fathers, the Turkiſh Molhas, the Armenian Verbieſts,

Verbieſts, the Perſian Sedres and Caſys, the Arabian Scheics, the ancient Parſes, the Indian Pandects—that after, I ſay, having conferred with all theſe, far from having elucidated any one of the three thouſand five hundred queſtions, (for to that number they amounted) of the Royal Society, he had contributed only to multiply the doubts upon them. And as theſe queſtions were all connected with each other, it followed, in contradiction to the opinion of the illuſtrious preſident, that the obſcurity of one ſolution darkened the evidence of another, that the cleareſt truths were become entirely problematical, and that it was even impoſſible to clear up any one of them, in this vaſt labyrinth of contradictory replies, and authorities.

The Doctor took a ſimple view of the ſubject. Amongſt the queſtions delivered to him for ſolution, there were two hundred

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on the Jewiſh theology; four hundred and eighty on that of the various communions of the Greek and Roman churches; three hundred and twelve on the ancient religion of the Bramins; five hundred and eight on the ſhanſcrit or ſacred language; three on the preſent ſtate of the Indian tribes; two hundred and eleven on the trade of Great Britain to India; ſeven hundred and twenty-nine on the ancient monuments in the iſlands of Elephanta and Salſette, in the vicinity of Bombay; five on the antiquity of the world; ſix hundred and ſeventy-three on the origin of ambergris, and the properties of the different kinds of bezoar ſtones; one on the cauſe, not before inveſtigated, of the courſe of the Indian ocean, which flows ſix months toward the eaſt, and ſix towards the weſt; and three hundred and ſeventy-eight on the ſources and periodical inundations of the Ganges.

Upon

Upon this occaſion the Doctor was requeſted to collect on his travels every poſſible information reſpecting the ſources and inundations of the Nile, a ſubject that had engaged the attention of the literati of Europe for ſo many ages. He conſidered, however, that it had been already ſufficiently diſcuſſed, and that it was beſides foreign to his miſſion.

Now, to each of the queſtions propoſed by the Royal Society, he carried, one with the other, five different ſolutions, amounting in the whole to ſeventeen thouſand five hundred: and ſuppoſing each of his nineteen brethren to have collected the ſame number, it followed that the Royal Society would have three hundred and fifty thouſand difficulties to reſolve, before they could eſtabliſh any one truth upon a ſolid baſis. Thus would the whole collection, far from cauſing each propoſition to converge towards a com-

mon centre, according to the terms of the inſtructions, make the queſtions diverge from each other, without its being poſſible to approximate them.

Another reflection gave the Doctor ſtill more uneaſineſs. That notwithſtanding in his laborious reſearches, he had employed all the *ſang-froid* natural to his country, and a politeneſs peculiar to himſelf, he had made implacable enemies of the greater part of the learned men with whom he had diſputed. What then, ſaid he, will become of the repoſe of my countrymen, when I ſhall have delivered to them, in my ninety bales, inſtead of truth, freſh ſubjects of doubts and diſputations?

Full of perplexity and vexation, he was on the point of embarking for England, when the bramins of Benares informed him that the ſuperior

ſuperior bramin of the famous pagod of Jagernaut, ſituated at the ſea ſide, on the coaſt of Orixa, near one of the entrances of the Ganges, was alone capable of reſolving all the queſtions of the Royal Society of London. He was in reality the moſt famous pandect, or doctor, ever heard of, and was conſulted from all parts of India, and ſeveral of the kingdoms of Aſia.

The Doctor inſtantly ſet out for Calcutta, where he applied to the Eaſt India company's ſuper-intendant, who, to the honour of the Britiſh nation and the glory of the ſciences be it recorded, completely equipped him for a journey to Jagernaut. He furniſhed him with a crimſon ſilk palanquin, with curtains and gold ſtuds; and two relays, conſiſting of four each, of ſtout coulis. In his retinue he had two common porters; a biſte or water-carrier; a gugglet-carrier; a hookah-

bader; a kittiſol-gee, or umbrella-carrier, to ſhade him from the ſun by day; and a miſol-gee, or flambeau-carrier, for the night. He had beſides a wood-cutter; two cooks; two camels with guides to tranſport his proviſions and baggage; two pions or runners, to announce his coming; four ſeapoys or rajah-pouts, mounted on perſian horſes, to eſcort him; and a ſtandard-bearer, diſplaying on his ſtandard the arms of England.

With this very ſplendid equipage, the Doctor might have been miſtaken for a clerk belonging to the Eaſt India company. There was, however, this difference, that inſtead of being ſent in queſt of preſents, he was provided with them. In India it does not do to appear with empty hands before perſons of dignity, and the ſuper-intendant had accordingly ſupplied the doctor, at the company's expence, with a beautiful teleſcope, and

and a Perſian foot carpet, for the chief of the Bramins; ſuperb chintzes for his wife; and three pieces of china taffety, red, yellow, and white, to make ſcarfs for his diſciples. The preſents being carefully laid upon the camels, the Doctor proceeded in his palanquin, with the book of the Royal Society.

On the road he weighed with himſelf which queſtion it would be beſt to propoſe firſt to the chief of the Bramins of Jagernaut, whether he ſhould ſet off with one of the three hundred and ſeventy-eight, relating to the ſources and inundations of the Ganges, or with that which reſpected the alternate and ſemi-annual courſe of the Indian Sea, which might tend to diſcover the ſources and periodical motions of the ocean throughout the whole globe: But, notwithſtanding this laſt queſtion was infinitely more intereſting to philoſophy, than all thoſe that had been propoſed

poſed for ſo many ages on the ſources and riſings of the Nile, it had not yet attracted the attention of the literati of Europe.

He therefore thought it would be better to interrogate the Bramin, upon the univerſality of the deluge, which had occaſioned ſo many diſputes. Or, going ſtill higher, whether it was true, that the ſun had repeatedly changed its courſe, according to the tradition, cited by Herodotus, of the Egyptian prieſts. Another queſtion ſtruck him forcibly, namely, the epoch of the creation of the world, which the Indians affirm to have laſted ſeveral millions of years. Sometimes he imagined it would tend to a more uſeful purpoſe, to conſult him on the kind of government beſt calculated for any nation; and on the rights of man, regarding which no code is any where to be found: But theſe laſt queſtions were not in the book.

It

It ſtrikes me, however, ſaid the Doctor, that it will be proper to enquire, in the firſt place of the Indian pandect, how to come at truth: If this is to be accompliſhed by reaſon, which is the method I have hitherto purſued, reaſon varies amongſt men. I ought alſo to enquire of him where truth is to be ſought—if in books, they univerſally contradict each other. And laſtly, whether truth ſhould be communicated to men, ſeeing that thoſe who attempt to do ſo, are ſure to involve themſelves in a quarrel. Here are three preliminary queſtions which never entered the head of our illuſtrious preſident. If the Bramin of Jagernaut can reſolve them, I ſhall make myſelf maſter of a key to all the ſciences, and, what will be ſtill better, I ſhall live in peace with every body.

Reaſoning thus with himſelf, the Doctor purſued his journey for ten days, during which

which time, he met with a multitude of folks returning from Jagernaut, every one enchanted with the learning of the chief of the Pandects, whom they had been to conſult. He had now reached the banks of the gulf of Bengal.

On the eleventh day, at ſun riſe, he perceived the famous pagod of Jagernaut, built near the ſea, over which is lofty red walls, its galleries, its domes, and its white marble turrets, ſeemed to have aſſumed the dominion. It is erected in the centre of nine avenues of evergreen trees, which diverge towards as many kingdoms. Each avenue is formed of trees of a diſtinct kind, of arec palm trees, cocoa trees, mangoes, fan palm trees, camphor trees, bamboos, almond trees, and ſandal trees: And they lead towards Ceylon, Golconda, Arabia, Perſia, Thibet, China, the kingdom of Ava, that of Siam, and the iſlands of the Indian Sea. The

The Doctor reached the pagod by the avenue of bamboos, which borders on the Ganges, and the enchanted iſlands at its entrance. Although built in a plain, it is ſo lofty, that notwithſtanding he perceived it in the morning, he did not reach it till towards night. He was truly ſtruck with admiration, when he conſidered, at a near approach, its magnificence and its ſize. Its bronze gates ſparkled with the rays of the ſetting ſun; and round its ſummit which loſt itſelf in the clouds, the eagles hovered. It was ſurrounded by a large baſon of white marble, which, on the ſurface of the tranſparent water it were filled with, reflected its domes, its galleries, and its gates. On every ſide were ſpacious courts, and gardens encompaſſed by commodious buildings, in which the officiating bramins were lodged.

The Doctor's pions, or running footmen, haſtened to announce him, and inſtantly a band of young dancing girls, came out of one of the gardens, and ranged themſelves before him, ſinging and dancing to the muſic of tabors. About the neck they had wreaths, and round the waiſt garlands of flowers, diſplayed in a very fanciful taſte.

The Doctor, ſurrounded by their perfumes, their dances and their muſic, advanced to the gate of the pagod, at the extremity of which he perceived, by the light of ſeveral gold and ſilver lamps, the ſtatue of Jagernaut in a pyramidal form, repreſenting the ſeventh incarnation of Brama, without hands and feet, which he had loſt in attempting to carry the world with a view to ſave it. Round the ſtatue were lying, with their faces to the earth, penitents, ſome of whom promiſed aloud to ſuſpend themſelves by the ſhoulders

to

to his chariot, on the day of Brama's feſtival; others that they would throw themſelves under the wheels to be cruſhed to death.

Although the ſight of theſe fanatics, who in pronouncing their horrible vows uttered deep groans, inſpired the Doctor with a degree of terror, he was on the point of entering the Pagod, when an old Bramin, ſtationed at the gate, ſtopt him to enquire what had brought him thither. When he had learned the neceſſary particulars, he acquainted the Doctor, that on account of his quality of frangui, or impure perſon, he could not be allowed to preſent himſelf, either before Jagernaut, or his high prieſt, until he had thrice waſhed himſelf in one of the baths of the temple, and had thrown aſide from his perſon whatever was the ſpoil of any animal; more eſpecially the hair of cows, animals adored by

the Bramins, and that of hogs, creatures they held in abhorrence.

How then am I to manage, replied the Doctor? I have brought with me as a preſent to the chief of the Bramins, a Perſian carpet, made of the hair of Angora goats, and ſtuffs of China ſilk; all things, rejoined the Bramin, offered to the temple of Jagernaut, or to the high prieſt, are purified by the gift itſelf: But in reſpect to your dreſs the caſe is otherwiſe. The Doctor was therefore under the neceſſity of taking off his coat of good Engliſh broad cloth, his goat ſkin ſhoes, and his beaver hat.

The old Bramin having waſhed him three times, wrapped him in cotton ſtained with ſandal wood, and conducted him to the entrance of the chief Bramin's apartment.

Holding

Holding under his arm the book of queſtions, furniſhed by the Royal Society, the Doctor was about to go in, when his conductor aſked him with what ſubſtance the book he had with him was covered. It is bound in calf, replied the Doctor. How! cried the enraged Bramin, did I not tell you that the cow was adored by the Bramins? and you dare to appear in the preſence of their chief with a book covered with calf ſkin! The Doctor would have been reduced to the neceſſity of purifying himſelf in the Ganges, if he had not removed every difficulty by preſenting his guide with a few pagodas.

He accordingly depoſited once more his book of queſtions in the palanquin, and conſoled himſelf for its loſs, by reflections to this effect. "Every thing reckoned, I have only three queſtions to put to this learned Indian,

Indian, and I ſhall be perfectly ſatisfied, if he will tell me by what means truth is to be ſought, where it is to be found, and whether it is proper to communicate it to men?"

The old Bramin now introduced the Doctor, clad in his cotton dreſs, bare headed and bare footed, to the high prieſt of Jagernaut, in a ſpacious ſaloon, ſupported by columns of ſandal wood. The walls, which were green, were formed of a compoſition of plaiſter and other materials, ſo brilliant and highly poliſhed, that they reflected the figures of the company. The floor was covered with very fine mats, each ſix feet ſquare. At the bottom of the ſaloon was an alcove, railed round with ebony; and within this alcove, through a lattice of red varniſhed India canes, the Doctor had a glimpſe of the venerable chief of the Pandects, with his white beard, and three cotton threads paſſed round

round his head, according to the cuſtom of the Bramins.

He was ſeated on a yellow carpet, with his legs croſſed, in ſo perfect a ſtate of immobility, that he did not even move his eyes. Some of his diſciples kept the flies from him with fans made of peacock's feathers; others burned in perfuming pans the fragrant wood of the aloes; and others again played very ſoftly on the dulcimer: As for the reſt, whoſe number was conſiderable, and amongſt them ſeveral faquirs, joquis, and fantons, they were ranged in files on each ſide the room, and kept a profound ſilence, their eyes fixed on the ground, and their hands croſſed on the breaſt.

The Doctor was deſirous of advancing to the chief of the Pandects, to pay his reſpects to him, but his conductor kept him back to the

the diſtance of nine mats, telling him that the Omrah's, or great Indian lords, advanced no nearer; that the Rajahs, or ſovereigns of India, only came to within ſix mats; the princes, ſons of the Mogul, to three; and that the Mogul himſelf was the only perſon who had the honour to approach the venerable chief, to kiſs his feet.

In the mean time ſeveral Bramins brought to the foot of the alcove, the teleſcope, the chintzes, the carpet, and the rolls of ſilk, which the Doctor's attendants had left at the entrance of the ſaloon: The old Bramin having ſurveyed them, without expreſſing any mark of approbation, they were carried into an inner apartment.

The Doctor was about to beg in a fine harrangue in the Indian tongue, when his guide ſtopt him, by deſiring him to wait the interrogatories

interrogatories of the high prieſt. He accordingly ſquatted himſelf down, with his legs croſſed like a taylor, according to the faſhion of the country. He grumbled to himſelf, at all theſe formalities; but what will a man not do to come at truth, when he has gone all the way to India in queſt of it!

Soon as he had ſeated himſelf the muſic ceaſed, and after a few moments of profound ſilence, the chief of the Pandects demanded of him why he had come to Jagernaut.

Although the high prieſt of Jagernaut delivered himſelf in the Indian language ſo diſtinctly as to be heard by a part of the aſſembly, his words were carried by a faquir, who gave them to another, and this one again to a third, who delivered them to the Doctor. He replied in the ſame language, that he was come to Jagernaut, to conſult the chief of

the Bramins, who had ſo high a reputation for knowledge, on the means to be purſued to come at truth.

The Doctor's anſwer was conveyed to the chief of the Pandects, by the interlocutors to whom the queſtion had been entruſted; and the whole of the converſation was managed in the ſame way.

The hoary chief, drawing himſelf back a little, replied,—Truth is not to be known but through the means of the Bramins. The whole aſſembly bowed in admiration of the reply of the high prieſt.

Where, cried the Doctor, with ſome earneſtneſs, is truth to be ſought? All truth, anſwered the Indian ſage, is contained in the four *beths*, written in the Schanſcrit tongue an hundred and twenty thouſand years ago, and

and the underſtanding of which is confined to the Bramins.

At theſe words the whole ſaloon echoed with applauſes.

The Doctor, recovering his *ſang froid*, delivered himſelf thus to the high prieſt of Jagernaut. Since God has encloſed truth in books, the underſtanding of which is reſerved for the Bramins alone, it neceſſarily follows that God has denied knowledge to the greater part of men, who are even ignorant of the exiſtence of the Bramins. Now, if this were the caſe, God would not be juſt.

Brama has ſo ordered it, replied the high prieſt; and the will of Brama can on no account be oppoſed. The applauſes of the aſſembly were louder than ever. As ſoon as they had ſubſided, the Doctor propoſed his

third queſtion, whether truth ſhould be communicated to men?

Frequently, ſaid the old Pandect, it is prudential to conceal it from mankind in general, but it is always a duty to diſcloſe it to the Bramins.

How! cried the Doctor in a rage, is truth to be diſcloſed to the Bramins, who conceal it from every body? indeed, indeed, the Bramins are very unjuſt.

No ſooner were the laſt words uttered, than a violent tumult aroſe in the aſſembly. The auditors had heard, without a murmur, God taxed with injuſtice; but it was quite otherwiſe when this reproach was applied to themſelves. The pandects, the faquirs, the the fantons, the joquis, the bramins and their diſciples, all at the ſame time ſtrove to argue againſt

againſt the Doctor. The high prieſt of Jagernaut put an end to the contention, by clapping together his hands, and pronouncing in a very diſtinct voice—The Bramins do not diſpute like the doctors of Europe. He then roſe, and retired amidſt the acclamations of the whole aſſembly, who murmured loudly againſt the Doctor, and would probably have done him ſome miſchief, had they not been reſtrained by their dread of the Engliſh, whoſe authority on the banks of the Ganges is ſo very great.

The Doctor having quitted the ſaloon, his conductor addreſſed him thus. Our moſt venerable chief, had you not made him angry, would have preſented you, as is cuſtomary, with ſherbet, betel, and perfumes. It is I who had reaſon to be angry, replied the Doctor, for having taken ſo much pains to no purpoſe. Pray what complaint has your chief

chief to make againſt me? How, replied the guide, did you not enter into a diſpute with him? Do you not know that he is the oracle of all India, and that each of his words is a ray of knowledge? I ought never to have doubted it ſaid the Doctor, putting on his coat, his ſhoes, and his hat.

It was a perfect ſtorm, and the night was not far off—the Doctor was deſirous of paſſing it in one of the lodgings of the pagod, but this was denied him becauſe he was a frangui. As the ceremony had made him very thirſty he requeſted ſomething to drink; water was brought him in a veſſel, which was broken as ſoon as he had allayed his thirſt, becauſe, as a frangui, he had polluted it by drinking out of it.

The Doctor, not a little nettled, called together his retinue, who had proſtrated themſelves

themſelves in adoration on the ſteps of the temple, and being ſeated in his palanquin, purſued his way back through the avenue of Bamboos, at the ſea ſide, the night ſetting in, and the ſky being covered with clouds.

On the road he entered upon the following reflections: The Indian proverb is very true which ſays, that every European who comes to India, acquires patience if he has it not, and loſes it if he has it. For my part, I have loſt mine. So it ſeems I could not be informed by what means truth is to be found, where it is to be ſought, and whether it ſhould be communicated to men! Thus is man condemned throughout the whole earth to errors and diſputes: it was well worth the trouble to come to India to conſult the Bramins!

Whilſt the Doctor reaſoned in this way with

with himſelf in his palanquin, one of thoſe violent ſtorms aroſe which in India are called typhons. The wind blew in from the ſea, and occaſioning a reflux of the water of the Ganges, made it ſurge and foam againſt the iſlands at the entrance. From the ſhore, columns of ſand ſprung up; and from the foreſts clouds of leaves, which were driven pell-mell acroſs the river and the plains, and were borne high into the air. At times the wind collected in the avenue of Bamboos, and although theſe Indian reeds are as lofty as the largeſt trees, it ſhook and bent them like the graſs of the meadows. Through the cloud of duſt and leaves the long avenue of reeds appeared undulating, a part of them lying on the ground to the right and left, whilſt the other part reared itſelf up with a murmuring noiſe.

The Doctor's retinue, dreading either to be

be crushed to death, or to be drowned in the water of the Ganges, which already overflowed the shore, made the rest of their way across the plains, directing their course at hazard towards the neighbouring heights. The night was shut in, and they walked for three hours amidst the most impenetrable darkness, without knowing whither they went, when suddenly a flash of lightning burst from betwixt the clouds, and illumined every part of the horizon. They now saw at a greater distance to the right the pagod of Jagernaut, the islands of the Ganges, the troubled sea, and right before, and close to them, a small valley and a wood betwixt two hills.

Hither they ran for refuge, and contrived amidst loud and incessant peals of thunder, to reach the entrance of the valley. It was flanked with rocks, and abounded with trees of a prodigious size. Although the tempest

bent their tops, their monſtrous trunks were unſhaken as the rocks which ſurrounded them.

This part of the ancient foreſt ſeemed the aſylum of repoſe; but it was penetrated with difficulty. At the ſkirt rattan reeds, winding in every direction, covered the foot of the trees, and creeping plants were intertwiſted from trunk to trunk. A ſtrong rampart of leaves was thus formed on all ſides, a few ſpots of verdure appearing through it, but to which there was no paſſage.

The rajah-pouts, however, opened one with their ſabres, and the Doctor's whole ſuite entered with the palanquin. They fancied themſelves ſheltered from the ſtorm, when the rain which fell very heavy, formed around them a thouſand torrents. In this perplexity they perceived from beneath the trees a light and a hamlet. The miſol-gee haſtened

haſtened thither to light his flambeau, but returned ſoon after, out of breath, exclaiming as he approached the company—do not come this way, I have ſeen a paria. Immediately the affrighted troop cried out with one conſent—a paria! a paria!

The Doctor thinking it was a wild beaſt of ſome kind, armed himſelf with his piſtols. What is a paria, ſaid he to the torch bearer. It is a man, replied the other, deſtitute of faith, and ſubject to no law. It is, added the chief of the rajah-pouts, an Indian of ſo infamous a caſt, that any one whom he merely touches is allowed to kill him. If we were to enter his habitation, we ſhould be debarred for nine months the worſhip of the temples, and ſhould be obliged to purify ourſelves by bathing nine times in the Ganges, and having ourſelves waſhed as often by the hands of a Bramin, in cow's urine. We will not enter the dwelling of a paria, exclaimed every Indian at once.

How have you learned, ſaid the Doctor to his torch bearer, that your countryman is a paria, that is to ſay, without faith, and without law? Becauſe, anſwered the torch bearer, when I opened the door of his hut, I ſaw him lying down, on the ſame mat, with his dog, and his wife to whom he was giving drink in a cow's horn. Every one of the Doctor's retinue repeated luſtily, we will not enter the dwelling of a paria. You may remain here if you pleaſe, ſaid the Doctor, for my part, all the caſts in India are the ſame to me, when I with to ſhelter myſelf from the rain.

In pronouncing theſe words, he leaped from his palanquin, and putting under his arm his book of queſtions and his night dreſs, with piſtols in hand, he came to the hut. He had ſcarcely knocked at the door, when it was opened by a man with a very engaging phyſiognomy, who inſtantly drew back, ſaying

ing—maſter I am only a poor paria, who am unworthy to receive you: but ſhould you think proper to ſhelter yourſelf in my humble dwelling, you will confer upon me a particular honour. My brother, replied the Doctor, I moſt chearfully accept your hoſpitality.

The paria now went out with a torch in his hand, a load of dry wood on his back, and a baſket filled with cocoa nuts and bananas under his arm. Approaching the people of the Doctor's retinue, who were ſeated under a tree at ſome diſtance from the cottage, he addreſſed them thus. Since you will not do me the honour to be my gueſts, here are fruits in the rind which you may eat without being defiled, and here is fire-wood to kindle, to dry you, and defend you from the tigers. May God bleſs and preſerve you.

Having done this he returned to the cottage,

tage, and ſaid to the Doctor, maſter, I repeat to you that I am no better than an unhappy paria; but ſince I perceive by your complexion and your dreſs that you are not an Indian, I flatter myſelf that you will accept without repugnance the food which your poor ſervant has to offer you. At the ſame time he laid on a mat ſpread upon the ground, mangoes, cream-apples, ananas, potatoes baked in the aſhes, broiled bananas, and a pot of rice prepared with ſugar and the milk of the cocoa-nut. He then withdrew to his own mat, near his wife and an infant ſleeping at her ſide in a cradle.

Virtuous man, cried the Doctor, thou art far my ſuperior, ſeeing that thou doeſt good to thoſe who contemn thee. If thou wilt not honour me with thy company on the ſame mat, I ſhall conceive that thou haſt formed an unfavourable opinion of me, and will inſtantly quit thy cottage, at the riſk of being

being drowned by the rain, or devoured by tigers.

The paria came and ſeated himſelf on the mat, and both fell to eating heartily. How happy was the Doctor! in the midſt of the tempeſt he had the ſatisfaction, and it was no ſmall one, to find himſelf in ſafety. The hut was ſo ſtrong, that no external violence could ſhake it: beſides its being ſeated in the narroweſt part of the valley, it was built beneath a banyan tree, whoſe branches, which threw out bundles of roots at their extremities, formed as many arches to ſupport the main trunk. The foliage of this tree was ſo thick, that not a drop of water could paſs through it; and although the diſmal howlings of the tempeſt, with loud claps of thunder at intervals, were diſtinctly heard withinſide the hut, ſtill the ſmoke of the fire, which went out at the middle of the roof, and the flame of the lamp, were not in the ſmalleſt degree agitated.

The

The Doctor looked round him, and admired the ſerenity of the Indian and his wife. Their infant, olive coloured and poliſhed like bronze, ſlept in a cradle, which the mother rocked with her foot, at the ſame time that ſhe amuſed herſelf with making for it a collar of black and red angola peas. In ſhort the very dog partook of the common happineſs; lying near the fire with a cat, he from time to time half opened his eyes, and ſighed at the ſight of his maſter.

Loaded as the Doctor was, when he entered the hut, it was not poſſible for him to come provided with his hookah. The paria accordingly, who was no ſtranger to the luxury of ſmoking, which prevails ſo generally in India, brought him, as ſoon as the meal was ended, a cherut,* and a live coal. Hav-

* The Cherut, like the *Sagar* of the Weſt-Indies, is a twiſted tube of leaf tobacco, and is chiefly uſed by thoſe whoſe poverty denies them the higher luxury of a Hookah.

ing

ing lighted one for himſelf, he made a ſign to his wife, who placed upon the mat two diſhes of cocoa, and a large calabaſh filled with punch, which ſhe had prepared during the ſupper, with arrack, citron juice, juice of the ſugar-cane, and water.

Whilſt they ſmoked and drank alternately in a very ſociable way, the Doctor ſaid to the Indian—in my opinion you are one of the happieſt men I have ever met with, and conſequently one of the wiſeſt. Allow me to aſk you a few queſtions. How comes it that you are ſo tranquil in the midſt of this terrible ſtorm? You have notwithſtanding no other ſhelter than a tree, and trees attract lightning. Never, replied the paria, has lightning fallen upon a banyan tree. That is very ſingular, ſaid the Doctor; it is undoubtedly becauſe this tree, in common with the laurel, has a negative electricity. I do not underſtand you, anſwered the paria—my

wife thinks it is becauſe the God Brama one day took ſhelter under its foliage. I am of opinion, for my part, that God, in theſe tempeſtuous climates, having provided the banyan tree with a very thick foliage, and vaults, formed by its branches, to ſhelter men from the ſtorm, will not ſuffer them, when they have ſought refuge beneath it, to be a prey to the lightning.

Your reply, obſerved the Doctor, is a very religious one: it appears that you owe your tranquility to a truſt in God. Conſcience is more to be depended upon in theſe caſes than ſcience. Tell me, I beſeech you, what is your ſect; for you do not belong to any of thoſe of India, ſince no Indian will have an intercourſe with you. In the liſt of learned caſts I was to conſult on my way, I do not find that of the parias. In what canton of India is your pagod? Every where, anſwered the paria; my pagod is nature.

nature. I adore the great author of nature at ſun riſe, and I worſhip him when I lie down to reſt. Inſtructed by misfortune, I never with-hold my aſſiſtance from one more unhappy than myſelf. I endeavour to beſtow happineſs upon my wife, my child, and even my dog and cat. I look for death at the cloſe of my life, as a pleaſant ſlumber at the end of the day.

From what book have you drawn theſe principles, aſked the Doctor? From nature, replied the Indian; I know of no other. It is indeed a large book, but who has taught you to read in it? Misfortune, ſaid the paria: being of a caſt reputed infamous in my country, and denied the privileges of an Indian, I have made myſelf a man—driven out of ſociety, I have flown to nature.

But at leaſt, in this ſolitude of yours, obſerved the Doctor, you have a few books?

Not one, I can neither write nor read. You have ſaved yourſelf a vaſt many doubts and perplexities, ſaid the Doctor, rubbing his forehead. For my part, I have been ſent in queſt of truth, from my native country, England, and have conſulted the learned of many nations, with a view to enlighten mankind, and augment their happineſs: but after many fruitleſs reſearches, and very warm diſputes, I am led to conclude that the ſearch after truth is a folly, becauſe he who ſhould ſucceed in finding it, would not be able to impart it, without making himſelf a great many enemies. Tell me ſincerely, do you not hold the ſame opinion with myſelf on this ſubject? Although I am ſimply a poor ignorant man, anſwered the paria, ſince you permit me to offer my opinion, I muſt think that every one is obliged to ſeek truth for his own good and proſperity: he would otherwiſe become covetous, ambitious, wicked, ſuperſtitious, and even a cannibal, according

according to the prejudices or intereſts of thoſe entruſted with his education.

The Doctor, who never loſt ſight of the three queſtions he had propoſed to the chief of the pandects, was charmed with the paria's reply. Since you are of opinion, ſaid he, that it is the duty of every one to ſeek truth, tell me, in the firſt place, what means ſhould be employed towards the attainment of it: for our ſenſes deceive us, and our reaſon miſleads us ſtill more. Reaſon differs almoſt univerſally amongſt men, and is at the bottom, I believe, nothing more than the particular intereſt of each individual: and this may account for its varying ſo much throughout the whole earth. There are not two religions, two tribes, two families—what do I ſay? there are not two men who think exactly in the ſame way. How then are we to proceed in the ſearch after truth, if the underſtanding fails us in that reſpect? It appears

pears to me, replied the paria, that it is to be done by the means of a ſimple heart. The ſenſes and the underſtanding may err; but a ſimple heart, although it may be deceived, never deceives.

Your reply is profound, ſaid the Doctor. Truth is to be ſought with the heart, and not with the underſtanding. All men feel in the ſame manner, but they reaſon differently, becauſe the principles of truth are in nature, and the conſequences they draw are founded in ſelf-intereſt. It is with a ſimple heart, therefore, that truth is to be ſought; for a ſimple heart never feigns to underſtand what it does not underſtand, nor to believe what it does not believe: it does not aſſiſt to deceive itſelf, nor afterwards to deceive others. Thus a ſimple heart, far from being weak like thoſe of the greater part of mankind ſeduced by their own intereſt, is ſtrong, and ſuch as is required in the ſearch after, and preſervation

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of truth. You have devoloped my idea, anſwered the paria, much better than I could have done myſelf: truth may be compared to the dew of heaven; to preſerve it pure, it muſt be collected in a pure veſſel.

Sincere man, ſaid the Doctor, your obſervation is very juſt; but the great difficulty ſtill remains to be cleared up. Where is truth to be ſought? A ſimple heart depends on ourſelves, but truth depends on other men. And where can it be found, if thoſe who ſurround us are either miſled by their prejudices, or corrupted by their intereſt, as is almoſt generally the caſe? In my travels I have viſited many nations, have examined their libraries, and conſulted their learned men: I have every where met with contradictions, with doubts, and with opinions a thouſand times more various than their languages. If, then, truth is not to be found in the moſt celebrated depoſitories of human knowledge,

knowledge, where is it to be ſought? To what purpoſe will it tend to have a ſimple heart, amongſt men whoſe underſtanding is falſe, and the heart corrupted?

I ſhould ſuſpect truth, the paria replied, if I could obtain it in no other way than through the medium of men. It is not amongſt them that we ought to ſeek it, it is in nature. Nature is the ſource of every thing which exiſts; her language is not unintelligible and variable, like that of men and their books. Men make books, but nature makes things. To found truth upon a book, would be as if we were to found it upon a picture or a ſtatue, which can intereſt one country only, and which changes every day. Books are the art of man, but nature is that of God.

You are perfectly in the right, anſwered the Doctor, nature is the ſource of natural truths;

truths; but where, for example, is the ſource of hiſtorical truths, unleſs it be in books? And, again, with the help of theſe, how are we to aſſure ourſelves of the truth of a fact which happened two thouſand years ago? Thoſe who have tranſmitted it to us, were they without prejudices, without heat of party? Had they a ſimple heart? Beſides, the books which hand down to us the occurrences of old times, require tranſcribers, printers, commentators, tranſlators;—and do not all theſe gentry, in a greater or leſs degree, mutilate truth? As you have very juſtly obſerved, a book is merely the art of a man. We muſt therefore renounce all hiſtorical truths, ſince we have no other way to come at them but through the medium of men ſubject to error. Of what importance to our happineſs, ſaid the Indian, is the hiſtory of things paſt? The hiſtory of what is, is the hiſtory of what has been, and of what will be.

Very well, ſaid the Doctor; but you will confeſs that moral truths are eſſential to the happineſs of the human race. How are theſe to be found in nature? Animals make war amongſt themſelves, and kill and devour each other; elements battle againſt elements: ſhould men engage againſt men in a ſimilar ſtate of warfare? By no means, anſwered the paria! every man will find the rule of his conduct in his own heart, if his heart be ſimple. There nature has implanted this law: —do not that to others which you would not wiſh others to do to you. 'Tis very true, obſerved the Doctor; ſhe has regulated the general intereſts of mankind by our own particular ones: but how are we to come at the knowledge of religious truths, amidſt the many traditions and modes of worſhip which divide nations? In nature herſelf, replied the paria; if we conſider her with a ſimple heart, we ſhall diſcover God in his power, his intelligence, and his goodneſs: and as we are weak, ignorant,

ignorant, and wretched, this is ſufficient to engage us to adore him, to pray to him, and to love him all our life, without diſputing.

Admirable, cried the Doctor! But now tell me whether he who diſcovers a truth of any kind, ought to impart it to other men? By making it public, he is ſure to be perſecuted by a multitude of people who live by the oppoſite error, aſſerting that this very error is the truth, and that whatever tends to deſtroy, it is error itſelf.

Truth, anſwered the paria, muſt be communicated to men whoſe hearts are ſimple; that is to ſay, to good men who ſeek it, and not to the wicked who reject it. Truth is a rich pearl, and the bad man a crocodile who cannot apply it to his ears, becauſe they are ſhut againſt its admonitions. If you caſt a pearl to a crocodile, he will try to devour it, will break his teeth, and fly furiouſly at you.

I have only one objection to make, ſaid the Doctor, which is this: It follows from what you have juſt now advanced, that men are condemned to error, although truth be eſſential to them; for, ſince they perſecute thoſe who ſtrive to impart it, where is the teacher who will dare to come forward for their inſtruction? Misfortune, replied the paria, which itſelf perſecutes men for their inſtruction. Oh! exclaimed the Doctor, for once, my man of nature, I fancy you are miſtaken. Misfortune makes men ſuperſtitious, and weakens the heart and the underſtanding. The more miſerable men are, the more are they vile, credulous, and ſervile. This, obſerved the paria, is becauſe they have not been ſufficiently unfortunate. Misfortune reſembles the black mountain of Bember at the extremity of the burning kingdom of Lahor: Whilſt you aſcend it you ſee around you, nothing but barren rocks; but when you have reached the ſummit, you perceive the

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ſky over your head, and at your feet the kingdom of Caſhemire.

Charming and juſt compariſon, replied the Doctor, every one in this life has his mountain to climb. Yours, virtuous, ſolitary, muſt have been very ſteep and rugged, for you are raiſed above all the men I know. You have been very unhappy; but firſt tell me, why your caſt is ſo contemned in India, and that of the Bramins ſo honoured? I am juſt returned from viſiting the high prieſt of the pagod of Jagernaut, who has no more ideas than his idol, and who cauſes himſelf to be worſhipped like a God.

The bramins, ſaid the paria, have a tradition that at the creation of the world, they ſprang from the head of Brama, and the parias from his feet. They add, moreover, that Brama one day in travelling requeſted food of a paria, who ſet before him human fleſh.

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It is on theſe accounts that their caſt is honoured, and ours deſpiſed, throughout India. We are not even allowed to approach the cities, and every nayre or rajah-pout may kill us with impunity, if we approach him within the reach of our breath.

By St. George, cries the Doctor, this favours highly of folly and injuſtice! How have the bramins managed to ſucceed, in propagating ſuch an abſurdity amongſt the Indians? By teaching it them, replied the paria, from their infancy, and repeating it to them inceſſantly: Men are inſtructed like parrots. Unhappy man! ſaid the Doctor, what means have you purſued to extricate yourſelf from the abyſs of infamy into which the bramins threw you at your birth? No ſituation, it appears to me, can be more hopeleſs than that of a man viliſied in his own eyes: It deprives him of the firſt of conſolations; for the moſt certain of all is, that we find in looking into ourſelves. At

At firſt, anſwered the paria, I ſaid to myſelf—is this hiſtory of Brama really true? The bramins, who are intereſted in giving themſelves a celeſtial origin, are the only people who relate it. I have no doubt but they invented and propagated the fiction, that a paria endeavoured to make Brama a cannibal, to revenge themſelves upon the parias who refuſed to believe the reports they ſpread abroad of their holineſs.

I afterwards reaſoned with myſelf thus: Granting this to have been the caſe, God is juſt, and cannot render a whole caſt culpable for the crime of one of its members, of which it has not participated. But, ſuppoſing all the caſt of the parias to have been originally acceſſory to this crime, their deſcendants have not been their accomplices. God no more puniſhes in the children the faults of their forefathers whom they have never ſeen, than puniſhes in the forefathers the faults of the children

children yet unborn. I will ſuppoſe again, that I, at this time, without having partaken of his crime, partake of the puniſhment of a paria perfidious to his God ſome thouſand years ago: Still can any thing live and flouriſh under God's diſpleaſure? If God had curſed me, nothing I ſhould plant would thrive. At length I ſaid to myſelf,—I will allow that I am hated by God, who confers benefits upon me: I will endeavour to render myſelf agreeable to him, by following his example, and will do good to thoſe I ought to hate.

But how, aſked the Doctor, did you manage to live, rejected thus as you were by every body? At firſt, the paria replied, I ſaid to myſelf: If the world is thy enemy, be to thyſelf a friend. Thy miſery is not beyond the ſtrength of a man. However heavy the rain may be, a ſmall bird receives but a ſingle drop at a time. I went into the woods and along the ſea ſhores in ſearch of food,

food, but could ſeldom collect any thing beſides wild fruits, and was hourly in dread of beaſts of prey: Thus I knew that nature had made ſcarcely any thing for man alone, and that ſhe had attached my exiſtence to the very ſociety which ſpurned me from its boſom.

I now frequented the deſerted fields, which are very numerous in India, and never failed to meet with ſome nouriſhing plant that had ſurvived the ruin of its cultivators. I travelled thus from province to province, certain of meeting every where with a ſubſiſtence amidſt the ruins of agriculture. When I found the ſeeds of an uſeful vegetable, I put them into the ground, ſaying, if not for myſelf, 'twill be for others. I was leſs miſerable at ſeeing I could do ſome good. One thing I deſired paſſionately, it was to enter the cities. I admired from afar their ramparts and their towers, the prodigious concourſe of barks on their rivers, and of caravans on their roads,

loaded with merchandize which drew to one common centre from all parts of the horizon; the troops of ſoldiers on their way thither, from the diſtant provinces, to do duty; and foreign ambaſſadors, attended by their numerous ſuites, puſhing forward to make their entry, either for the purpoſe of notifying fortunate events, or to contract alliances.

I approached their ſuburbs as nearly as I could with ſafety, contemplating with aſtoniſhment the long columns of duſt raiſed by ſuch a concourſe of travellers, and leaped with joy at the confuſed noiſe which ruſhes from great and populous cities, and which in the adjacent plains reſembles the murmuring of waves that break againſt the ſea ſhore.

I ſaid to myſelf——an aſſemblage of men of ſo many conditions, who unite their induſtry, their riches, and their pleaſures, muſt make

make a city a delightful reſidence. If I am not allowed to draw near to it in the day time, what will prevent my entering it at night? A feeble mouſe, ſurrounded by ſo many enemies, paſſes to and fro at pleaſure in the duſk, from the hut of the peaſant to the palace of the king; and, to enjoy life, requires the light of the ſtars only; why ſhould I need that of the ſun?

I made theſe reflections in the environs of Delhi, and they inſpired me with ſo much courage, that as ſoon as night had ſpread over the firmament her thick veil, I entered that city by the gate of Lahor.

I paſſed through a long ſolitary ſtreet, formed on each ſide by houſes with terraces in front, ſupported by arches, beneath which were the tradeſmen's ſhops. At certain diſtances I met with large caravanſeras well ſecured, and ſpacious bazars, or market pla-

ces, in which the moſt profound ſilence prevailed.

In approaching the interior part of the city, I croſſed the ſuperb quarter of the Omrahs, abounding in palaces and gardens ſituated at the ſide of the Gemna. The air was filled with the ſound of inſtruments, and the ſweet ſtrains of dancing girls, who, by the light of torches, ſang and danced on the rivers banks. I placed myſelf at the gate of a garden to enjoy ſo agreeable a ſpectacle, but was driven away by ſlaves, who beat moſt unmercifully the poor wretches they found there.

Leaving the quarter of the great, I paſſed near ſeveral pagods, where a vaſt number of miſerable enthuſiaſts lay proſtrate on the ground, and wept lamentably. I fled in haſte from the ſight of theſe monuments of ſuperſtition and terror, and ſoon after the Mollahs,

Mollahs,‡ calling from on high, with ſhrill voice, the hour of the night, gave me to underſtand that I was not far from a moſque.

I came next to the European factories, with their pavillions, and watchmen, who cried inceſſantly, *kaler dar!* take care of yourſelf: and afterwards deſcried a large building, which I knew to be a priſon, by the rattling of chains, and the groans that iſſued from it. Scarcely was I out of hearing of theſe, when my ears were aſſailed by the moans of the ſick in an hoſpital, from whence were carried out cart loads of dead.

On my way I met with robbers running furiouſly through the ſtreets, to eſcape from the patrols who purſued them; groups of beggars, who, notwithſtanding they were heartily caned by ſlaves ſtationed there on purpoſe, craved at the doors of the palaces a few crumbs from the table; and in every part women

‡ A Timekeeper.

women who proſtituted themſelves publicly for a livelihood.

At length, after paſſing through a very long ſtreet, I came to an immenſe ſquare, which ſurrounds the fortreſs inhabited by the Great Mogul. It was covered with the tents of the Rajahs of his guards, and thoſe of their ſquadrons, diſtinguiſhed from each other by flambeaus, ſtandards, and canes mounted with the tails of Thibet cows. A large moat filled with water, and the ſides planted with artillery, ſurrounded the fortreſs.

By the light of fires kept by the guard, I had a perfect view of the caſtle, and ſaw with ſurpriſe the immenſe height of its towers, and almoſt immeaſureable length of its ramparts. I had a violent propenſity to enter within ſide; but was reſtrained by large korahs, or ſcourges, hung upon poſts, the ſight of which deprived me of every wiſh to

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put my foot in the ſquare. I accordingly placed myſelf at one of the extremities, near ſome negro ſlaves, who were ſeated by a fire, and took a leiſure ſurvey of the imperial palace.

This, then, ſaid I, is the dwelling of the happieſt of men! It is for his obedience that ſo many religions are propagated; for his glory that ſo many ambaſſadors make their entry; for his aggrandizement that ſo many provinces are exhauſted; for his pleaſure that ſo many caravans travel; and for his ſecurity that ſo many armed men watch in ſilence!

Whilſt I was making theſe reflections, loud ſhouts of joy were heard throughout the whole ſquare, and I ſaw eight camels paſs by, decorated with ſtreamers. I was informed that they were loaded with the heads of rebels, ſent by the Mogul's generals from the province of Decan, where one of his ſons, whom he had named Governor, had for three years made war againſt him. Shortly

Shortly after, a courier mounted on a dromedary, arrived full ſpeed: His buſineſs was, to announce the loſs of one of the frontier towns of India, through the treachery of the commander, who had delivered it up to the king of Perſia.

Scarcely had this courier paſſed by, when another, ſent by the governor of Bengal, came with the intelligence that the Europeans, to whom the emperor, on account of their commerce, had granted a factory at the entrance of the Ganges, had built a fortreſs there, and made themſelves maſters of the navigation of the river.

Some moments after the arrival of theſe two meſſengers, an officer at the head of a detachment of guards, ſallied out from the caſtle, with orders from the Mogul to proceed to the quarter of the Omrahs, and bring from thence, loaded with chains, the three principal

principal ones, accuſed of having kept up a correſpondence with the enemies of the ſtate.

On the preceding day, he had arreſted a Mollah, charged with having in one of his ſermons pronounced an eulogy on the king of Perſia, and having declared in the moſt unqualified way, that the emperor of India was an infidel, becauſe he drank wine.

Laſtly, news was brought, that the Mogul had juſt cauſed one of his wives and two captains of his guard to be ſtrangled, they having been convicted of abetting his ſon's rebellion.

Whilſt I was buſied in reflecting on theſe tragical events, a large column of fire ſuddenly aroſe from one of the kitchens of the ſeraglio. The ſmoke, in thick volumes, reached the clouds; and the intenſe flame illumined the towers of the fortreſs, the foſſes, the ſquare,

the minarets of the city, and extended to the very horizon.

Inſtantly the kettle drums, and the karnas or great hautboys, of the guard, ſounded the alarm with a frightful clangor. Squadrons of cavalry diſperſed themſelves through the city, burſting open the doors of the houſes near the caſtle, and forcing the inhabitants, whom they ſcourged without any mercy, to run to the fire.

I too was made ſenſible how dangerous the neighbourhood of the great is to little folks. The former may be compared to fire, which conſumes even thoſe who throw incenſe upon it, if they approach it too near.

I wiſhed to eſcape, but every avenue was ſhut in upon me, and it would have been impoſſible for me to extricate myſelf, if God's providence had not ſo ordered it, that the ſide where

where I had ſtationed myſelf was that of the ſeraglio. The eunuchs, who carried off the women upon elephants, aſſiſted me not a little; for whilſt, on all ſides, the guards were forcing the mob, with ſcourges, to run to the help of the caſtle, the elephants, by ſound of trumpet, obliged them to retreat.

Thus, now purſued by one party, now driven back by the other, I made my eſcape from this frightful chaos, and by the light of the fire, reached the oppoſite extremity of the ſuburb, where, far from the great, in humble cottages, the inhabitants repoſed from their fatigues.

It was only now that I began to breathe; and reflections ſuch as theſe occurred to me, when I had recovered myſelf from my fright.

I have at length ſeen a city! I have ſeen the reſidence of the maſters of nations! Oh!

of how many maſters are not they themſelves the ſlaves! They obey, even at the ſeaſon of repoſe, pleaſures, ambition, ſuperſtition, avarice: and have to dread, during ſleep itſelf, a crowd of wretched and malignant beings who ſurround them—robbers, beggars, courtizans, incendiaries; nay, their very ſoldiers, their nobles, and their prieſts. If thus harraſſed by night, what muſt a city be in the day time?

The troubles of man increaſe with his enjoyments. How deſerving of pity is the emperor, who unites them all! He has to dread wars foreign and domeſtic; and the very objects which are his conſolation and defence, his generals, guards, mollahs, women and children. The moats of his fortreſs cannot ſtay the phantoms of ſuperſtition, nor can his elephants, finely accoutred as they are, baniſh far from his preſence the ſtern cares which hover round him.

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I, for my part, have none of theſe evils to dread. No tyrant has uſurped a dominion, either over my body, or my ſoul I can ſerve God according to my conſcience, and have nothing to dread from any man, if I can but forbear from tormenting myſelf. Indeed, a paria is leſs unhappy than an emperor.

In uttering theſe words, the tears ſtarted in my eyes. I fell on my knees, and thanked heaven, that, in teaching me to ſupport my misfortunes, it had ſhewn me others of a more intolerable kind.

From that time I frequented the ſuburbs only of Delhi. I ſaw from thence the ſtars lighten the habitations of men, and blend themſelves with their fires, as if the ſky and the city had united in eſtabliſhing one common empire. When the moon illumined this landſcape, I perceived colours far different from thoſe of the day, and gazed in ſilent admiration

admiration at the towers, the houſes, and the trees, ſilvered over, and reflected at a diſtance in the Gemna.

I thus paraded at my eaſe, the large, ſolitary, quarters of the city, and was ſometimes led to fancy that whatever I ſaw was my own. I ſhould however, had I craved it, have been refuſed a ſingle handful of rice, ſo odious had religion rendered me!

Not being able to live among the living, I ſought a ſubſiſtence among the dead. I went to the burying places to eat on the tombs the food offered up by the piety of relations. I was fond, in places like theſe, of giving way to reflection. This, ſaid I, is the city of peace. From hence power and pride are baniſhed—here innocence and virtue are in ſafety. In this tranquil ſpot all the terrors of life are obliterated, even that of dying. This is the inn in which life's weary traveller reſts for ever—where the poor paria repoſes.

In

In the midſt of theſe meditations, I found death deſirable, and felt a hearty contempt for my exiſtence. I viewed the eaſtern horizon, from whence a multitude of ſtars ſprang up every moment; and notwithſtanding their deſtiny was unknown to me, I perceived that it was connected with that of men, and that nature, having provided for their neceſſities ſo many imperceptible objects, had at leaſt attached to their ſervice thoſe ſhe offered to their view.

My ſoul ſoared into the firmament amongſt the ſtars, and when aurora came to blend with their ſoft and eternal light her roſy tints, I imagined myſelf at the gate of heaven. But ſoon as the ſun had gilt the tops of the pagods, I diſappeared like a ſhadow. Far from men and their haunts, I went into the ſolitary fields, and laid myſelf at the foot of a tree, where I was lulled to ſleep by the melody of the warblers over my head.

Unfortunate

Unfortunate and feeling man, ſaid the Doctor, your recital is moving indeed! truſt me that cities for the moſt part ought to be ſeen at night only. After all, nature has her nocturnal beauties, which are not thoſe the leaſt intereſting: a famous poet of my nation celebrated no others. But inform me how you contrived at length to make yourſelf happy by day?

It was no little ſatisfaction to be ſo at night, replied the Indian. Nature reſembles a fine woman, who, in the day diſcloſes to the vulgar eye the beauties of her face only, but at night reveals to her lover her ſecret charms. If ſolitude, however, has its delights, it alſo has its privations. It appears to the unhappy man a tranquil port, from whence he obſerves the paſſions of others roll along, without being ſhaken by them. But whilſt he congratulates himſelf on his immobility, time drags him on. The anchor is not

not to be caſt in the current of life—alike it ſweeps along with it, him who ſtrives againſt its courſe, and him who abandons himſelf to it, the ſage as well as the libertine, and both reach the end of their days, one after having abuſed, the other without having enjoyed them.

I had no deſire to be wiſer than nature, nor to find my happineſs out of the laws ſhe had preſcribed to man. I was particularly ſolicitous to have a friend, to whom I could communicate my ſorrows and my joys. Long time I ſought ſuch a friend amongſt my equals, but could meet with none who were free from envy. I found one, however,—ſenſible, grateful, faithful, and inacceſſible to prejudices: 'tis true, it was not amongſt my own ſpecies that I ſucceeded, but amongſt animals; 'twas the dog you ſee. It lay expoſed, a young puppy, in the corner of a ſtreet, where it had nearly periſhed through

hunger. I was touched with compaſſion—I reared it—it became attached to me, and I made it my inſeparable companion.

This was not enough—I needed a friend more unhappy than a dog, one verſed in all the evils of human ſociety, who could help me to ſupport mine, who would be ſatisfied with the goods of nature, and would ſhare with me the enjoyment of them. It is only by twiſting round each other that two weak ſhrubs reſiſt the ſtorm.

Providence crowned my wiſhes by giving me a good wife. One night I repaired, as was cuſtomary, to the burying place of the bramins, and perceived there, by the light of the moon, a young female bramin half covered with a yellow veil. At the ſight of a woman of the blood of my tyrants, I ſtarted back with horror; but compaſſion urged me inſenſibly towards her, when I obſerved the taſk

taſk with which ſhe was buſied. She was placing food upon a hillock which covered the aſhes of her mother, burned alive ſome time before with the body of the huſband, in conformity to the uſage of the caſt. Another ceremony engaged her attention—ſhe burned incenſe to call up the ſhade of her deceaſed friend and parent.

Tears came into my eyes, at the ſight of one more unfortunate than myſelf. Alas! ſaid I, I am bound by the bonds of infamy, thou by thoſe of glory. I live tranquil, at leaſt, at the bottom of my precipice—thou art always trembling at the edge of thine. The ſame deſtiny which cut off thy mother, threatens thee alſo. Thou haſt but one life, and thou haſt to dread two deaths. If thy own death ſhould not convey thee to the tomb, that of thy huſband will drag thee thither alive.

I wept, and ſhe wept. Our eyes, bathed in tears, met and diſcourſed together in the ſilent language of the unhappy: She turned aſide hers, wrapped herſelf in her veil, and departed.

The following night, I returned to the ſame ſpot. On this occaſion ſhe had placed on her mother's tomb a larger quantity of food. She judged that I needed it; and as the bramins frequently poiſon their funeral offerings, to prevent the parias from eating them, to ſatisfy me as to the uſe of hers, ſhe had brought nothing but fruit.

I was moved by this token of humanity; and to teſtify the reſpect I bore to her affectionate gift, inſtead of taking the fruits, I joined with them flowers. I choſe poppies, to expreſs the concern I took in her grief.

The night after I ſaw with joy that ſhe approved

approved my homage—the poppies were watered, and ſhe had placed at ſome diſtance from the tomb another pannier of fruit.

Pity and gratitude made me bold. Not daring to ſpeak to her as a paria, for fear of offending her, I undertook, as a man, to expreſs to her all the affections ſhe had kindled in my ſoul. To make myſelf underſtood, I borrowed, according to the cuſtom of India, the language of flowers—to the poppies I added marigolds. The ſucceeding night I found the marigolds and the poppies watered.

I became more venturous. In my next nightly viſit, I joined with the poppies and the marigolds, a flower from which a black die for leather is extracted, as the expreſſion of an humble and ill-fated love. At early dawn of day I ran to the tomb; but found my laſt flower withered for want of water.

The following night, with a trembling hand, I placed there a tulip, whoſe red leaves and black heart expreſſed the fire that conſumed me. The morning came, but not to my relief—the tulip was in a withered ſtate.

I cannot expreſs to you my chagrin, which however, did not prevent my making another attempt. When all was huſhed, and each inhabitant of Delhi retired to reſt, I carried to the tomb a roſe bud with its thorns, as a ſymbol of my hopes, mixed with many fears. But what was my deſpair, when I perceived at day-break my roſe bud far from the tomb! I thought I ſhould have gone diſtracted.

Still, whatever might happen, I reſolved to ſpeak to her, and accordingly on the ſucceeding night I threw myſelf at her feet. I held out to her my roſe bud, but the power of ſpeech was denied me.

The

The bramin woman broke ſilence. Unhappy man, ſaid ſhe, your attentions beſpeak love, but ſoon, alas! I ſhall be no more. Soon ſhall I follow the example of my mother, and accompany to the funeral-pile my huſband who is juſt dead. He was old—I married him when an infant. Adieu—retire and forget me—in three days I ſhall be reduced to aſhes.

In uttering theſe words ſhe ſighed. For my part, overwhelmed with grief, I ventured to reply thus. Wretched bramin woman, nature has burſt aſunder the bonds which ſociety impoſed upon you: conclude by breaking thoſe of ſuperſtition. It is in your power to do ſo, by taking me as your huſband.

What! replied ſhe, weeping, ſhall I eſcape from death to live with thee in infamy! if thou loveſt me, leave me to die.

God forbid, I cried, that I ſhould extricate you from your misfortunes, only to plunge you into mine! Dear and lovely woman, let us fly together to the retreats which the foreſt afford—it is better to confide in tigers than in men. But heaven, in which I truſt, will not forſake us. Let us fly:—love, the night, thy wretchedneſs, thy innocence—every thing favours us. Let us haſten, unfortunate widow! already thy pile is prepared—already thy dead huſband ſummons thee to it. Poor, feeble, bent-down plant, ſupport thyſelf upon me, and I will be thy palm-tree.

She groaned heavily, and caſting a look on the tomb of her mother, then towards heaven, let fall one of her hands careleſsly into mine, and with the other took my roſe bud. Inſtantly I caught hold of her arm, and we betook ourſelves to flight. On our way I threw her veil into the Ganges, to perſuade her relations that in her deſpair ſhe had drowned herſelf. We

We walked for ſeveral nights by the river's ſide, concealing ourſelves by day in the rice fields, and at length reached this part of the country, which old wars have depopulated. I penetrated into the middle of this wood, where I have built the cottage you ſee, and planted a ſmall garden. I revere my wife as the ſun, and I love her as the moon. In this ſolitude we are every thing to each other. In the world one was deſpiſed, the other was unhappy: but as we eſteem each other mutually, the praiſes I give her, and thoſe ſhe beſtows upon me, ſeem ſweeter than the applauſes of the multitude. In concluding his recital, the paria caſt a tender look at his infant in the cradle—then at his wife, who ſhed tears of joy.

The Doctor, drying up his own, ſaid to his landlord: in good truth, what is honoured amongſt men frequently merits their ſcorn,

and what is deſpiſed by them frequently deſerves to be honoured. But God is juſt;—you are a thouſand times happier in your obſcurity, than is the high prieſt of Jagernaut in all his glory. In common with the whole of his caſt, he is expoſed to all the revolutions of fortune. The plagues of the civil and foreign wars which for ſo many ages have laid waſte your fine country, for the moſt part fall on the bramins, who are frequently addreſſed on the ſcore of forced contributions, in conſequence of the dominion they exerciſe over the minds of the people.

But what renders their caſe ſtill harder, they are the firſt victims of their inhuman religion. By dint of preaching error, they are themſelves ſo caught by his contagion, as to loſe the ſentiment of truth, of juſtice, of humanity, and of piety. They are bound in the chains of ſuperſtition they have forged for their

their countrymen. Every moment they are obliged to waſh, to purify—and are forced to abſtain from a great number of innocent enjoyments. Laſtly, the very recital fills me with horror, by a conſequence of their barbarous dogmas, they ſee their relations, mothers, ſiſters, nay, their own children, burned alive. Thus does nature, whoſe laws they have violated, puniſh them. You, on the other hand, are allowed to be ſincere, good, juſt, hoſpitable, and pious: and by your humility itſelf, you eſcape the blows of fortune, and the evils of opinion.

The converſation being ended, the paria took leave of his gueſt, whom he left to his repoſe, and retired into a ſmall inner apartment, with his wife and the child's cradle.

In the morning, at day-break, the Doctor was awakened by the ſinging of birds neſtled

in the branches of the banyan-tree, and by the voices of the paria and his wife engaged in their morning prayer. He got up, and was very ſorry to find, when this examplary couple opened the door to bid him good day, that there was no other bed in the cottage beſides the conjugal one, and that they had ſitten up all night to yield it to him.

After they had made their ſalem (the Indian ſalutation) they ſet about getting ready the breakfaſt; and in the mean while the Doctor took a turn in the garden, which, as well as the cottage, he found ſurrounded by arches of the banyan-tree, ſo interwoven that they formed a kind of hedge impenetrable even to the ſight. He could perceive only, above their foliage, the red ſides of the rock which flanked every part of the valley, and from whence iſſued a ſmall ſpring that watered the garden.

It

It was planted without any order. In it were ſeen, confuſedly ſcattered, mangoſtan, orange, cocoa, batan, mango, jaca, banana, and other trees, all loaded with flowers or fruit, even to their very trunks. Round the arec palm-tree the betel twined, and the pepper plant round the ſugar cane. The air was filled with a variety of perfumes.

The ſun had already ſcaled the horizon, and illumined the tops of the trees, upon which ſnakes, ſhining like rubies and topazzas, vaulted from branch to branch; whilſt the bengalis, birds peculiar to Bengal, and others of the feathered tribe, warbled from their neſts their melodious concerts.

Every learned and ambitious thought baniſhed far from him, our philoſopher was taſting the ſweets of this charming retreat, when the paria came to invite him to breakfaſt.

faſt. Your garden, ſaid the Doctor, is delightful: I find no other fault with it but that it is too ſmall, Were I in your place, I would add a bowling green, and extend it into the foreſt. Maſter, anſwered the paria, the leſs ſpace any one occupies, the more he is ſheltered: a leaf ſuffices for the neſt of a *tati*. †

They now entered the cottage, in a corner of which they found the paria's wife giving the breaſt to her infant: the breakfaſt was diſplayed in a ſimple order.

After a ſilent repaſt, the paria, obſerving the Doctor anxious to depart, addreſſed him thus. My gueſt, the plains are ſtill covered by laſt night's rains—the roads are impracti-

† A Bird of the Eaſt-Indies, which faſtens its Neſt to the leaf of a Tree by a kind of thread.

cable;

eable; ſpend this day with us. It is impoſſible, ſaid the Doctor, on account of my retinue. I ſee, replied the paria, that you are in haſte to quit the country of the bramins, to return to the land of Chriſtians, whoſe religion makes men live as brethren. The Doctor ſighed and roſe up.

The paria made a ſign to his wife, who, with downcaſt eyes, and without ſpeaking, preſented to the Doctor a baſket filled with flowers and fruit. The paria engaged to ſpeak for her—maſter, ſaid he, we have neither ambergris, nor aloe wood, to perfume our gueſts according to the cuſtom of India: we have only flowers and fruit. I truſt, however, that you will not deſpiſe this ſmall baſket, filled by my wife's hands. In it their are neither poppies nor marigolds, but jaſmins and bergamot flowers, ſymbols, by the laſtingneſs of their perfumes, of our affection,

tion, the remembrance of which will continue when you are far from us.

The Doctor took the baſket, and ſaid to the Indian—I want words to acknowledge your hoſpitality, and to teſtify to you all the eſteem I bear you. Accept this gold watch, it is made by Graham, the moſt celebrated watchmaker in London. To this the paria replied—maſter, we have no need of a watch: we have one which goes always, and is never out of order; it is the ſun. My watch, rejoined the Doctor, ſtrikes the hours. Our birds ſing them, anſwered the paria.

At leaſt, ſaid the Doctor, take theſe coral beads, to make red collars for your wife and child. My wife and my child, replied the Indian, will never want red collars whilſt our garden produces angola peas.

Vouchſafe

Vouchſafe then, ſaid the Doctor, to accept theſe piſtols—they will defend you in your ſolitude from thieves. Poverty, anſwered the paria, is a rampart which keeps the thieves from us: the ſilver with which your arms are mounted would be enough to attract them. In the name of God who protects us, and from whom we wait our recompenſe, do not deprive us of the price of our hoſpitality.

I muſt requeſt of you, however, ſaid the Doctor, to keep ſomething in remembrance of me. Well, my gueſt, replied the paria, ſince you will have it ſo, I will venture to propoſe an exchange. Take my betel box,‡ it will ſerve to hold your ſnuff; and your ſnuff-box will contain my betel. I ſhall then poſſeſs ſomething to remind me that a philoſopher of Europe did not diſdain to accept the hoſpitality of a poor paria.

‡ A Tobacco-box.

The exchange being made, the Doctor went out, and called together his retinue, who, dripping with rain, and benumbed with cold, had ſpent a very bad night. After embracing the paria, he got into his palanquin.

The paria's wife remained weeping at the door of the cottage, with the child in her arms; but her huſband accompanied the Doctor to the ſkirts of the wood, heaping bleſſings upon him. May God, ſaid he, reward you for your goodneſs to the unfortunate! May he accept me as a ſacrifice for you! May he proſper your return to England, that country of friends and learned men, who ſeek the truth over the whole earth for the happineſs of mankind!

I have travelled, replied the Doctor, over one half of the globe, and have ſeen every where nothing but error and diſcord: I have found

found truth and happineſs in your cottage alone.

They now ſeparated, but not without diſcovering ſymptoms which a modern philoſopher would aſcribe to the weakneſs of human nature. The Doctor had got a conſiderable diſtance on his way, when, looking round, he ſaw the good paria at the foot of a tree, making ſigns with his hands to bid him adieu.

On his return to Calcutta, the Doctor embarked for Chandernagore, whence he ſailed for England. When he arrived at London, he ſent his ninety bales of manuſcripts to the preſident of the Royal Society, who depoſited them in the Britiſh Muſeum, where, at this very hour, the literati and journaliſts are ſtill employed in making from them, tranſlations, concordances, eulogies, phillipics, criticiſms, and pamphlets.

As

As to the Doctor, he kept to himſelf the three replies of the paria upon truth. He frequently took ſnuff out of the betel box: and when any of his friends aſked him what were the moſt uſeful facts he had collected on his travels, he replied, Truth is to be ſought with a ſimple heart; it is not to be found out of nature; and is to be communicated to men of worth only. To which he added—there is no real happineſs without a good wiſe.

FINIS

For the information of our [illegible], I may informe you that the Doctors name was Charles Lawson the great literate of the 13th century

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